



Sam Brownback

UNITED STATES SENATOR ■ KANSAS

303 Hart Senate Office Building • Washington DC 20510 • (202) 224-8950

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

News Release

J

January 31, 2000

CONTACT ERIK HOTMIRE

BROWNBACK TAKES HOLLYWOOD APPEAL TO NEW YORK

WASHINGTON – U.S. Sen. Sam Brownback this evening continued his appeal for Hollywood to curb excessive violence and sexual content in popular culture at a public forum hosted by the Creative Coalition and held at the HBO Building in New York City.

“This evening, we come to speak truth to power,” Brownback said. “What is on television, in the movies, and over the airwaves -- the stories and songs of America -- mold and shape hearts, minds and attitudes far more than what happens in the halls of Congress.

“The extraordinary power and influence of entertainment media can be used for good -- or for ill. Certainly there are high-quality TV programs that intelligently educate and wholesomely entertain. There are movies and songs which stir our loftier aspirations. And there are children’s programs that have been honored for their educational value. We should not hesitate to praise these shows and their producers. But if a TV program can educate and edify, it can also confuse and corrupt. Unfortunately, much of what appears in entertainment is not an edifying, uplifting, constructive force. It is quite the reverse.

“We are calling upon the entertainment industry to create a voluntary code of conduct, and to stop marketing violent products to children. Parents obviously shoulder a huge responsibility in monitoring their child’s entertainment, and intervening when appropriate. But entertainment companies must also shoulder some responsibility for the product they produce and promote.

“We have come here not to threaten with legislation, but to appeal to the corporate conscience of industry executives. We are pleased to meet with entertainment executives, to discuss ways we can work together to address this problem.

“This is a cultural problem which demands cultural solutions. The entertainment industry is the chief purveyor of our nation’s stories. The content of those stories, and the quality of those programs, will do much to shape the values, attitudes, and assumptions of the next generation. It is a tremendous power, and ought to be exercised responsibly,” Brownback said.

Joining Brownback in the panel discussion were U.S. Sen. Joe Lieberman and former Education Secretary William Bennett. The panel was moderated by author and speech writer Peggy Noonan.

Signers of the ‘Appeal to Hollywood’, which was publicly released in July, include former Presidents Carter and Ford, Generals Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf, former Education Secretary William J. Bennett, former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, National Political Congress of Black Women Chair C. Delores Tucker, entertainers Steve Allen, Naomi Judd, Carol Lawrence, and Joan van Ark, along with thousands of concerned citizens.